

**Understanding
the organization of global trade
for agricultural products:
From governance to governmentality**

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Objectives of the presentation :

- Starting with some critics of the GVC approach then proposing a foucaldian perspective as an alternative to study the evolution of the organization of global trade for agricultural product

Some critical remarks on GVC

References :

- Gereffi, G. (1994). The Organization of Buyer-Driven Global Commodity Chains: How US retailers Shape Overseas Production Networks". Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism. G. Gereffi and M. Korzeniewicz. Westport, Greenwood Press.
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- Gereffi, Humphrey, Kaplinsky and Sturgeon (2001). Globalization, Value Chains and Development. IDS Bulletin. **32**: 1-8p.

- Humphrey, J. and H. Schmitz (2001). "Governance in Global Value Chains." IDS Bulletin **32**(3): 19-29
- Ponte and Gibbon (2005). Quality standards, conventions and the governance of global value chains. Economy and Society. **34**: 1-31p.
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Some definitions of “governance”

- Gereff 1997 = “governance structure”
 - “(i.e., authority and power relationships that determines how financial, material and human resources are allocated and flow within a chain)”
 - “Two distinct types of governance structures for GVC’s have emerged in the past two decades, which for the sake of simplicity are called “producer driven” and “buyer driven” commodity chain”
- H and S 2000 = “Governance refers to any co-ordination of economic activities through non-market relation” (including hierarchy but not market relations)

- G, H, K and S 2001 = “The question of governance: how chains are organized and managed”
 - “Governance can be defined as non-market coordination of economic activity”
 - “Governance involve the ability of one firm to influence or determine the activities of other firms in the chain”
- H and S 2001 = “chain governance”
 - “we use the term to express that some firms in the chain set and/or enforce the parameters under which others in the chain operate”
 - “arrangement that make possible the non-market coordination of activities”
- G, H and S 2005 = “governance form”
 - The use of “explicit coordination” with a foot-note saying that “explicit coordination (...) refer(s) to non-market form of coordination of economic activity”
 - Five distinct types : market, modular VC, relational VC, captive VC, hierarchy

•P and G 2005 :

- “Forms of co-ordination should be distinguished from overall mode of governance of GVCs. A GVC may be characterized by different forms of co-ordination in various segments, yet a single, and relatively coherent mode of overall governance”
- “Governance is the process of organizing activities with the purpose of achieving a certain functional division of labour along the chain – resulting in specific allocations of ressources and distribution of gains. Governance is about defining the terms of chain membership, incorporating/excluding other actors accordingly and allocating to them value-adding activities that lead agents to do not wish to perform”
- “The distinction between buyer-driven and producer-driven chains then remains a useful device for the analysis of governance

Looking for the leader (the governor)

- “Governance involve the ability of one firm to influence or determine the activities of other firms in the chain” (G, H, K and S 2001)
- The driveness issue: buyer driven versus supply driven

Low consideration for the « interior » of the firms

- « A chain without governance would be just a string of market relations » (Humphrey, Schmitz 2001)
- A clear focus on inter-firm relations
- No interest for the actual working of hierarchy

Technological determinism and naturalization

- Gereffi 1997:
 - producer drivenness GCC = capital and technology intensive industry »
 - Buyer drivenness GCC = labor intensive industry
- G, H and S 2005:
 - The complexity of information and knowledge required to sustain a particular transaction
 - The extent to which this information and knowledge can be codified
 - The capabilities of actual and potential suppliers

Three more comments:

- Uncertainty about what exactly is governed in value chains
 - Products and processes
 - Or competition
 - Or Structure of the industry
- Low interest in the way « governance » is actually exercised
- Low interest in historical change

**Some lessons on
government and governmentality
drawn from the “foucauldian”
literature**

Government and governmentality

- Government : « the conduct of conduct »
 - Diversity of forces and groups involved in the government process (“We need to cut off the King’s head: in political theory that has still to be done”)
 - What is governed ? The human beings, individuals and groups
 - Presume a set of standard or norms by which actual behavior can be judged
 - Include self-government
- Governmentality : two senses
 - A certain approach of the government issue : to study « mentalities of government » (Dean) i.e. «to analyze thought made practical and technical »
 - An historically specific form of government: Populations and economy ; Biopolitic (versus sovereignty and discipline)

A focus on governmental practices

- How we and are governed or what are the mechanisms for aligning personal conduct with socio-political objectives
- To analyze “the means of calculation, both qualitative and quantitative, the type of governing authority or agency, the form of knowledge, techniques and other means employed, the entity to be governed and how it is conceived, the end sought and the outcomes and consequences” (Dean)
- “The mentalities and machinations of government that we explore are not merely traces, signs, causes or effects of “real” transformations in social relations. The terrain they constitute has density and significance of its own” (Rose and Miller)

Government and knowledge

- Role of knowledge “to render aspects of existence thinkable and calculable, and amenable to deliberated and planful initiatives: a complex intellectual labour involving not only the invention of new forms of thought, but also the invention of novel procedures of documentation, computation and evaluation” (Rose and Miller)
- Inscription devices
- Experts

History and genealogy

- Regime of practices : « historically constituted assemblages through which we do such things as cure, care, relieve, punish educate, train and counsel ». To Study how the « regimes of practices » come into being, are maintained and are transformed (Dean)
- Studying the genesis of ideas and related devices. “Genealogy is the patient labour of historico-political analysis and contestation of existing narratives” (Dean)

Liberalism...

- Freedom and government
 - freedom has inspired the invention of a variety of technologies for governing
 - To govern through making people free (“the freedom of the governed as a technical means of securing the ends of government) (town, family and school)
- The need to limit the scope of the State vis à vis principle of the market (because of the limited ability of the state to know and to shape actual behaviors) or the rights of the individual

...and advanced liberalism

- Self realization supported by the state
- Governing through consumption (from citizens to consumers, from patient to customer)
- Implementing public policies to provide what the market needs to function
- Audit : the control of control
- Autonomization and responsabilization

From discipline to control ?

- Deleuze 1990
- Continuous monitoring and management of the risk
- Multiplication of sites where the exercise of freedom requires proof of legitimate identity

Government and governmentality in global trade for agricultural products

What is the question ?

- The various government techniques employed to make global trade for agricultural products possible
- Three different “problems” :
 - long distance: The impossibility of a direct contact between the “producer” and the “consumer”. Global starts just beyond the “bourg” (Braudel: the identity of France). Surveillance
 - Trading with, without or against the Prince. Constraint.
 - Cross-cultural trade (Curtin). Translation.

Territories: building governable spaces

- Factory (le comptoir)
- Market place (Les Halles)
- Foires
- Plantations
- Colonies
- Nations

Labor: mobilization and coordination

- Plantation as a disciplinary technology
- Family farms
 - Family as a labor government entity
 - Self-government
 - Opening the « black box »
 - Native agriculture and colonial and post-colonial development
 - Sustainable development

Experts and developers

- Producing knowledge + shaping and normalizing the self-regulating capacity of subjects
- The golden age of the civil servant
- Epistemic communities (round tables and so on)

Governing with the market

- Standards : governing by ignoring or destroying information
- Certification : self-monitoring and outsourced surveillance

Conclusion: three main differences

- From « why are the chain are governed ? » to « how are the chain governed ? »
- From the « one » to the multiplicity of government entities
- From non-market coordination to the creation of the necessary device to govern with the market